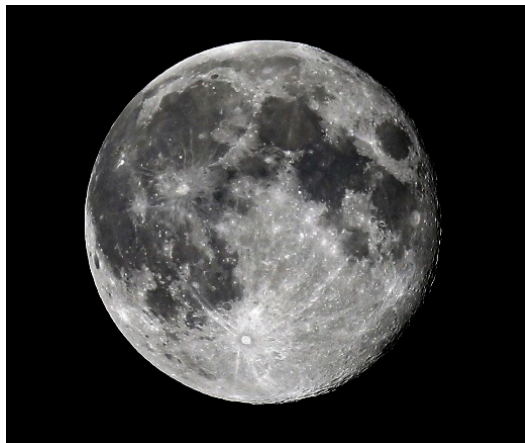


THE FACE IN THE MOON

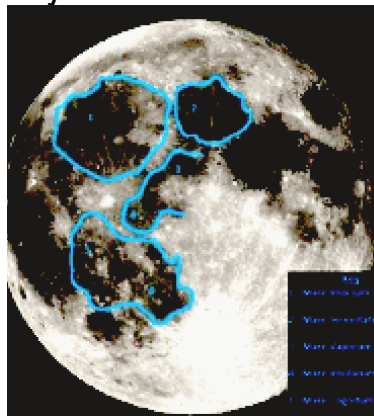
by Rick Potvin / July 20, 2024

Have you ever wondered what people meant when they referred to the "Man in the Moon" or the "Face in the Moon"? I did. I never really understood the man or face on the moon until I was an adult. Some people say that two men landed on the moon in a 2-part rocket ship called Apollo 11, one part being the "mothership" and the other part being the "lander" called LEM which means LunarExcursionModule. They say it landed on July 20, 1969 which is 55 years ago today as of this writing. They landed on the edge or shore of the Sea of Tranquility which is the dark patch that makes up the "left eye" of the face.

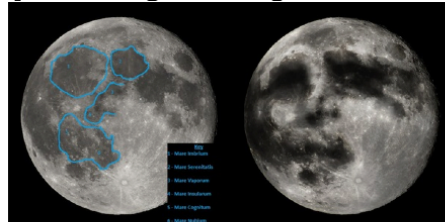
So let's start with how a full moon looks on a full moon night. Can you see the face?



Now can you see it? This is one version of the face where the right eye is actually the Sea of Tranquity.



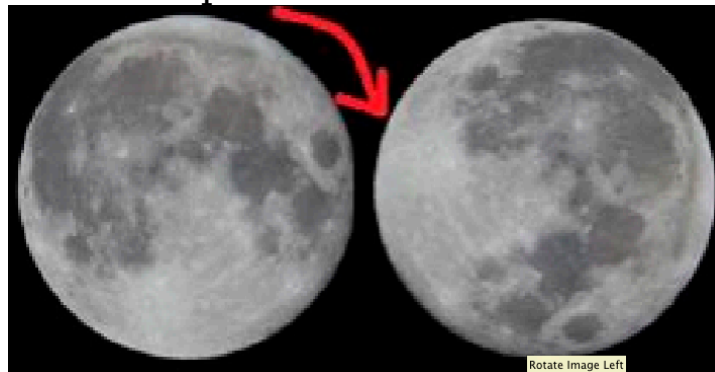
Here it is again with and without the guidelines so you can look back and forth easily to memorize where you should look for the face the next time a full moon is in your sky. The right image is enhanced for effect.



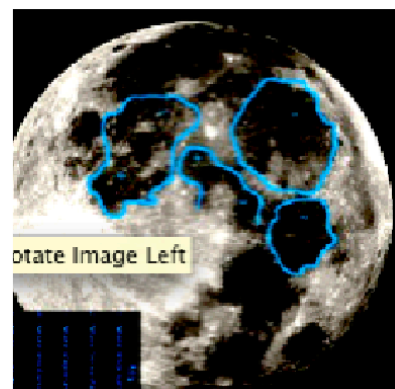
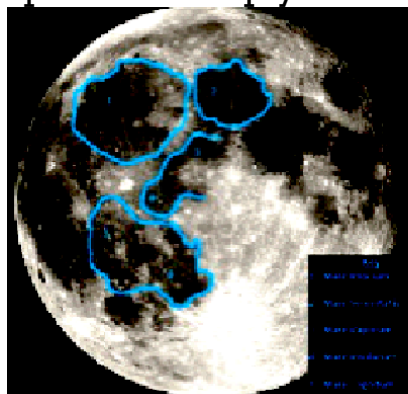
Lunar pareidolia (like the famous "Man in the Moon") are the result of the human mind attempting to piece together a coherent and familiar pattern when no such pattern exists. Here is one possible outline of the Man in the Moon as seen from the Northern Hemisphere.

Left: Luc Viatour/Weeneldo; Right: Cranyx/Reddit

Now let's take the original position and rotate it clockwise as it does when it migrates westward in the northern hemisphere, which is where Canada and the U.S.A. are located. You might see the first rotation as in the photo below but the second rotation goes too far. Can you still spot the two eyes and the nose that are now upside down in the second rotation?



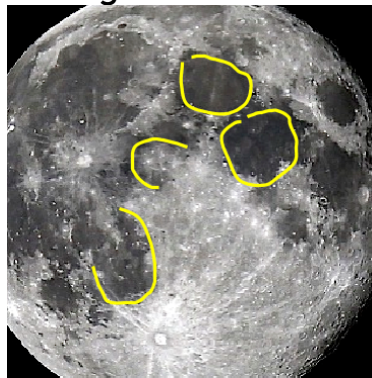
For normal rotations in the northern hemisphere, the following positions are seen in real life, without the guidelines of course. If the guidelines appeared in the sky like this, I would be seriously concerned but they're only in the picture to help you see the face and the rotation.



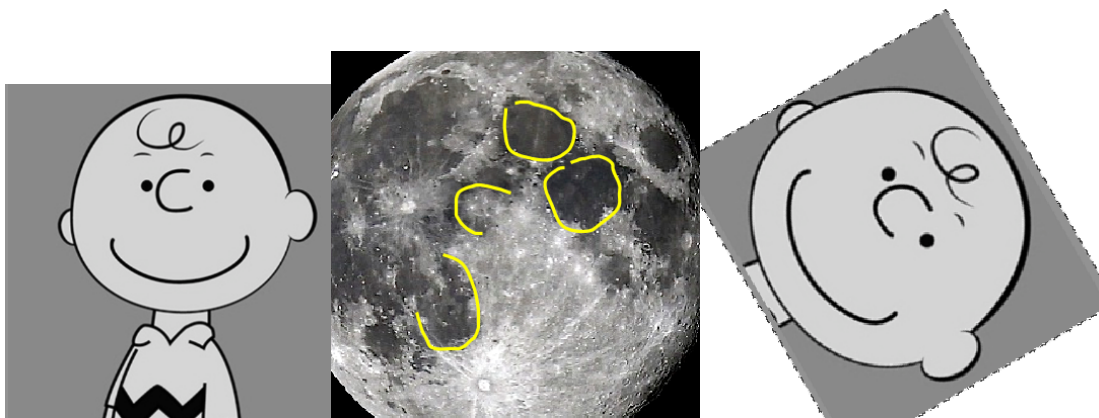
There are some different "seas" on the moon that create this face and there are some variations. I'll reprint the original full moon here and you can take a crayon or pencil and trace the face and eyes and nose where you see them yourself! Or you can upload it to your paint program and draw the face with your mouse or e-pen like I did.



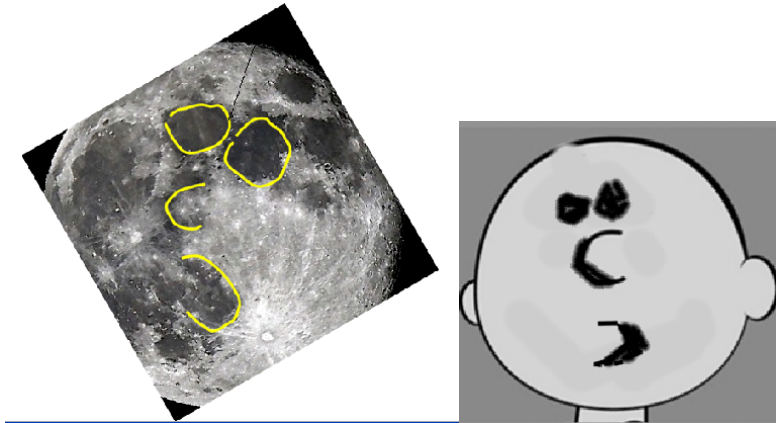
Did you come up with something a bit like this or not?



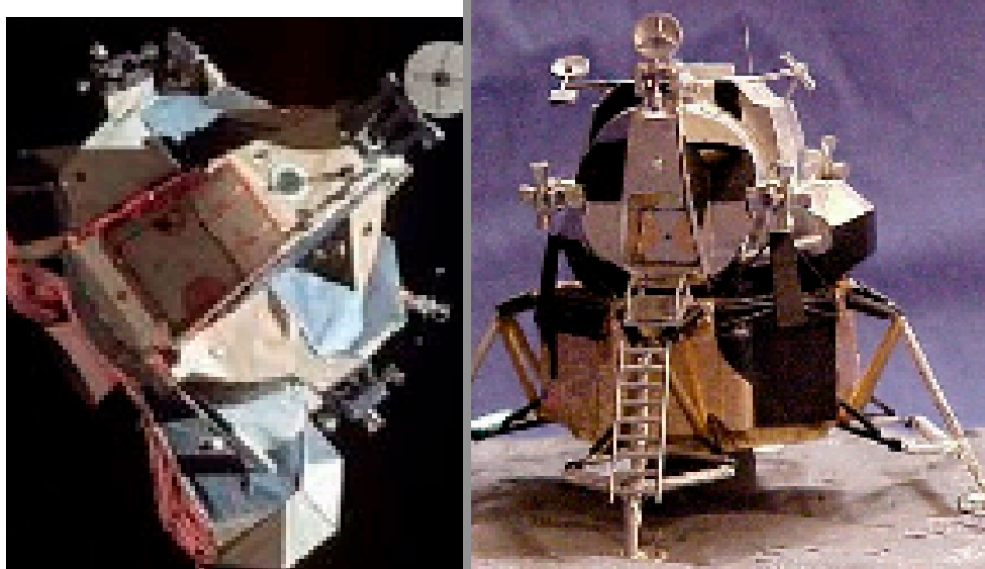
Here is Charlie Brown with the moon on the right. Compare the noses of each. Both have noses that look like the letter "C".



If Charlie Brown were modified to look like the face of the moon, he would look like the illustration below on the right. Pretty close. Creepy however. Still, unforgettable. Next time you look at the full moon, you'll likely recall these images. You'll never "not see" the Face in the Moon ever again, I don't think.



Interestingly, the Apollo Lunar Lander, called LEM, has a kind of face in it too that reminded me of the face in the moon. Nobody ever pointed this out to me in my whole life. I just sort of discovered it myself. I always thought the LEM LunarExpeditionModule looked pretty weird for a moon lander but now I think NASA designed it to look like the Face in the Moon! Here it is. See the two eyes and the mouth? It looks like an insect.



Now let's look at the Man in the Moon, Charlie Brown and the LEM Lander in a row to compare them and see the faces in all three.

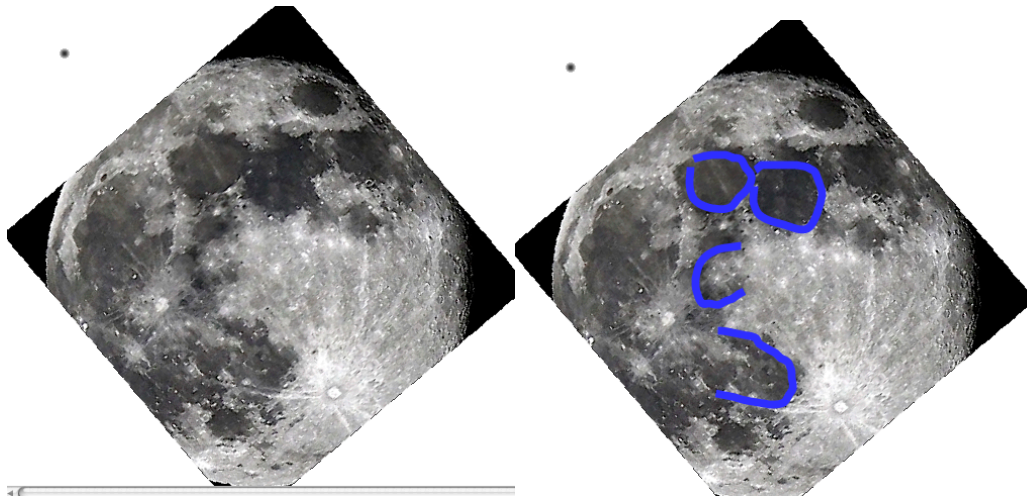


According to ChatGPT, only 25% of the population in the US and Canada know what the "Face In the Moon" looks like and only half of those people know what it looks like as the face "rotates" clockwise as it shifts westward. So the next time you're looking for a topic of conversation in your mind's Rolodex of Conversation Topics, you might ask the person you're with, "Have you ever noticed how the face of the Peanuts characters, the Man in the Moon, and LEM Lander are similar in appearance?". It's a great conversation starter! Let me know how it goes!

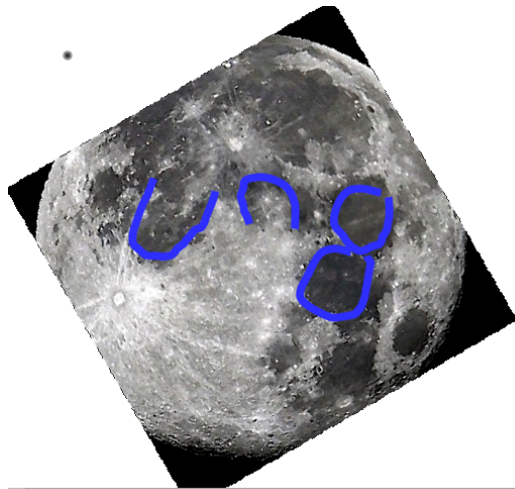
You may have to spend some amount of time in your front yard studying the full moon when it appears, looking to see the Face in the Moon for yourself. If it's already in the west, you'll have to tilt your head to the side for some time to "get it". Don't worry about what the neighbours think. Go ahead and tilt your head while standing in your front yard. People will wonder what you're doing. You may draw enough attention for the local TV station to interview you. You never know.

Always tilt your head and stare at the moon in a safe place and plant your feet firmly on the ground so you don't lose your balance. And never ever do this in a parking lot or anywhere else where there might be bicycles moving around. Your backyard is a fine place unless there are obstacles like dog leashes, old cans, or broken glass and other hazards you've been meaning to clean up. If you're on a balcony somewhere high above the street, don't lean out too far over the rail. In fact, don't lean out over the rail at all. Stay safe. You might find yourself yelling "I see it! I see the Man in the Moon, "the FACE in the moon". Either way, you can now enjoy explaining to others what you've discovered here today.

Once more, consider below left when the moon is rising in the east with the mouth at 6 o'clock. Below right, again, is the Face in the Moon or the "Man in the Moon" made obvious with blue outlines.



As the full moon appears to travel more westward each night, it appears to rotate about 90 degrees clockwise so that the mouth appears more toward 9 o'clock. It's easiest to view the moon's face when it's a full moon.



Rick Potvin in Phoenix Arizona, July 2024
rick_potvin@yahoo.com